

How to **NEVER** Have Your Business Card Thrown Away

**A Special Report by
NW Printed Solutions**

One of the most important building blocks of a good marketing plan is your business card. It is far and away the most likely item to find its way into the hands of your most important business contacts. And it is the one thing that is likely to remain when all your other marketing materials are long gone.

In other words, your business card is much more than just a piece of paper with your name, address and phone number printed on it. It is almost always the first impression given of your company, and often the ONLY impression others have of your company. It is a powerful sales tool. And it should be designed with that purpose in mind.

What can a business card do for your business?

Before asking the inevitable questions about the design of your business card, you should ask what its function in your overall marketing plan is supposed to be. A properly designed business card has at least four important marketing functions. Here they are:

1. It helps you to introduce your company.
2. It provides critical contact information about you or your company.
3. It conveys your most important sales message.
4. It communicates your corporate image.

An Introduction To Your Company

This may seem obvious, but think about it for a minute. Think of your business card as a tool for opening doors. Think of yourself at a meeting, or even at a social event. What better way to introduce yourself to a person than to hand them your card? I'm not talking about shoving your card on people who don't want it--I'm talking about using your card as a tool to make useful connections with people who are likely to appreciate the introduction. Regardless of the amount of information on your card, this is a tiny brochure of your company. Some people keep business cards for a long time. A few months from now, people may not remember you, but if they have your card, your company is still being represented. If your card is not professional, what is their impression of your company?

NW Printed Solutions offers many printing techniques and processes that can help to create exactly the feeling or image you are wishing to portray about your company, be it tactile or visual. A study a few years ago showed that people overwhelmingly chose business cards with a tactile element as their favorites. We can create a tactile element by printing in raised ink, printing on textured stock, or by embossing (pushing the paper into a shape). Using specialty foils is another way to attract attention. We have had several displays of many business cards on our wall for years----the embossed ones are always a little "dirty" because people can't help but reach out and touch them! We can help you design the business card that says what you want and portrays the image you want of your business.

If you've been in business for a while, you've probably received your share of business cards--and no doubt you have thought many of them were BORING. You probably simply throw the card away. You have seen the card that has so much information on it that you really can't see any of it? What about the one that was obviously printed on the home computer? So how can you change this? How can you make your card stand out from the crowd? Here's some ideas that will ensure your card never ends up in the waste pile.

Pick An Interesting Color

Many studies have been done about the power of color---and even what each color implies---power, serenity, action, etc. Color is a very important consideration when developing your business card. Choose the color that best reflects your image. Make a unique impression.

Give It Style

Know what you want your style to be. We have seen thousands and thousands of business cards suiting each individual's or business's unique style. One of our favorite combinations is black raised ink on a beautiful paper. We love it when you walk in with a vision, and then after consultation, design, and production--walk out with your vision a tangible reality!! Die cut shapes can be very interesting and make your card stand out from the crowd. Some of the high end processes cost a little more, but the payoff to you can be extraordinary. There are many processes that don't cost more and can be equally effective. Wouldn't you want to be at an event where everyone wants your card because of the unique style?

Some people don't want an oversize card that won't fit into traditional storage files (business card holders, Rolodex etc), but others deliberately choose an odd size, feeling that their card will be the one sticking up out of the card holder. Put something on your business card that people will remember. If your logo is boring, think about updating it--or redesign it altogether!

If you're not sure what to do with your card to make it stand out, think of hiring a graphic designer---independently, or turn the design over to our experienced staff. We have been designing and producing high end, specialty cards since 1982! If you need some ideas, come browse through our thousands of samples.

Use Both Sides of the Card

Ever seen one of those card where there is so much information that you don't know what to look at? Consider using the other side of the card. White space is beautiful, as well as being very important to keep a business card clean, clear, and concise! Eliminate the clutter. Even though it is more expensive to print on both sides of your card, it is a better option than having too much information on one side! Make you and your logo stand out. Don't distract and/or make the reader struggle to figure out what you do, where you are located, or how to contact you!

The back of your card could also be used to make notes:

We met at _____ On (date) _____

We spoke about _____

Contact again on (date) _____

Offer Something or Give a Call to Action

A very good way to get your card saved is to have it get people to act on something. Offer a free report, tips or other materials if they visit your website, contact your office or call a special number. It could be as simple as:

"Present this card for a free watch battery"; or

"Ask for Fred to receive your first oil change free!"; or

"Log onto YourCompany.com for current discount coupons!" or

"Visit our website for your free report on how to make your business card stand out from the crowd"

Really, the possibilities are endless - you just need to create another reason for them to want to keep your card - so they'll take you up on your offer when they get back to the office or home.

Make Your Card More Memorable

Use specialty design to make your card stand out. Try a tri-fold, die cut, foil/emboss combination, full color/thermography combination and include some useful tips or expert advice. People are more inclined to keep a card that has some valuable information on it and one that clearly demonstrates your expertise.

Put Your Unique Selling Proposition on It

What makes you different from your competitors? Why do your customers continue to use you? Instead of putting your tagline or some slogan on the card, tell people what makes you unique. Do you have the fastest turnaround? Same day delivery? Best materials? Most reliable? Have you been in business for a long time? Here are some ideas we've seen on cards:

Credit cards and competitor's coupons accepted.

Easy to FIND - "Located next to ___ in the heart of ___"
Same day turnaround or it's *FREE!*

In business for 25 years

Walk-ins welcome. No appointment required.

Easy to get EXPERT ADVICE - "Pharmacist on duty around the clock."

What Not to Do With Your Business Card

In all our years of designing and printing business cards, here is our list of what can distract from your business card:

- Fonts that don't fit your image
- A logo that does not fit your image
- Unclear and hard to read fonts
- Bad photos and/or low resolution logos
- Backgrounds that compromise the legibility of the information
- Un-personalized cards
- Incorrect information
- No personality
- Cutesy or overly decorative (unless appropriate)
- Too much information - does your fax number really need to be on your card?
- Not enough white space--type-set too close to the edge
- Multiple logos--this can be confusing. Which company do you represent?
- Cards that are too big for standard size holders—(or NOT!)

Winning Elements for a Business Card

Here are some things that can help you achieve a fantastic card:

- Easy to read information
- Demonstrates your personality
- Unique and interesting
- Pleasing layout
- Well organized information
- Substantial, appropriate cardstock
- Informative (ex. Short biography or services on the back (if appropriate))

As you look at your current business card, consider the following:

- Have a logo and business card designed that defines your company and fits your image.
- If you aren't photogenic, look for alternatives. If it's imperative that your photo is on your card, consult a professional photographer that can help you look your absolute best.
- Less is more. If used, a background should be subtle and not overpowering.
- If a representative of your company has his name handwritten or someone else's crossed out, this reflects poorly on your company.
- Work with a designer that can design an effective and affordable solution to cards for multiple employees that can be easily updated.
- If you are required to show multiple logos, make sure the company you represent has the largest logo or consider putting affiliates' logos on the back.

If you need additional tips, strategies or design ideas, give us a call at 503.239.6694, or email us at info@nwprintedsolutions.com. We will be happy to set up a time to consult so that we can know exactly what you are looking for! You can rely on our many years of experience.